

Breast and Cervical Health Program

Facts on Breast and Cervical Health in Washington State:

- Mammograms are currently the best way to detect breast cancer in its earliest, most treatable stage.
- Among women age 50 and older, more than 20% report not having had a mammogram in the past two years.
- Most breast cancers occur in women over the age of 50, and the risk is especially high for women over age 60.
- Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer among Washington women.
- Invasive cervical cancer is one of the most preventable types of cancer due to the effectiveness of the Pap test.

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The Department of Health, through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), administers a breast and cervical cancer early detection program for low-income women in Washington State. Women who are at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level, ages 40 - 64 years, and are uninsured or underinsured are eligible for Washington's Breast and Cervical Health Program (WBCHP). Nearly 60,000 women are eligible for services each year. Over 10,000 women are enrolled and screened annually.

Early detection is the best way to combat breast and cervical cancer. It is estimated that screening could prevent approximately 15 percent to 30 percent of deaths from breast cancer among women over the age of 40 and virtually all deaths from cervical cancer. Economically disadvantaged women are less likely to receive cancer screening than other women and more likely to be diagnosed with more advanced disease and have higher mortality rates.

Program Goals

- Promote the quality and availability of breast and cervical cancer screening services.
- Increase state and local capacity to provide high quality breast and cervical screening services and timely, appropriate follow-up.
- Integrate with other systems and resources for follow-up services, including treatment, throughout the state.
- Increase women's survival from breast and cervical cancer.

A Comprehensive Service Delivery System

Program services are available statewide and include screening, public education, professional education, quality assurance, tracking/surveillance, and evaluation of service delivery components. Department of Health provides technical assistance and support to local WBCHP Prime Contractors who administer the program regionally. Clinics, private physicians, hospitals, local health departments, laboratories, and radiology facilities provide services. Reimbursement is at the Medicare rate and includes routine office visits, clinical breast exams, screening mammograms, Pap tests and other authorized diagnostic procedures. Community-based organizations, including local health departments, provide outreach activities with public education and community involvement.

High Risk/Target Populations - Particular emphasis is placed on high-risk populations, including women ages 50 years and older, Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and lesbians.

Funding - Federal funding during the five-year (FFY03 – 07) grant period is approximately \$20 million. Every \$3 of federal funding is matched with \$1 of local in-kind resources. For the 2005-07 biennium \$1.9 million in state funds is available for screening, coordination and outreach services. Sixty percent of total funding is spent on screening and follow-up activities, and 40 percent on state and local capacity building. The Puget Sound and Oregon/Southwest Washington Affiliates of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation also support the program annually.